



Huntington's disease research news. In plain language. Written by scientists. For the global HD community.

Start here!



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By Dr Jeff Carroll on November 01, 2012

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***Welcome to HDBuzz!** This special page is for people who are new to Huntington's disease, or new to the world of HD research.*

Reading the articles linked here will help you pick up the basics of what Huntington's disease is, and get up to speed with some of the most promising things scientists are doing to come up with effective treatments for HD.

Huntington's disease - the bare essentials

- Our Science FAQ covers the very basics of HD and introduces some ideas about why we need research to find treatments.

About HDBuzz

- Our HDBuzz FAQ and People Page explain what HDBuzz is, and the people behind it.
- And our Funding page explains where we get our money from and how we make sure HDBuzz is neutral and reliable.

The most promising possible treatments

Some of the world's top scientists are working round the clock to develop treatments for Huntington's disease - and real progress is being made. Dozens of possible treatments are being worked on, and every day a successful treatment gets one day closer. Here are our personal top four approaches.

- **Gene silencing.** Huntington's disease is caused by a faulty protein, and gene silencing drugs tell cells not to make that protein. Gene silencing is our best hope for an effective treatment. Read about it in our Gene Silencing Primer - and find out just how close it's getting, in our very latest gene silencing articles.
- **KMO inhibition.** KMO is a chemical machine that determines the balance of certain helpful and harmful chemicals in cells. Our article on KMO Inhibitor Drugs explains how blocking it might be useful for treating Huntington's disease.
- **PDE inhibition.** PDEs are a family of molecules involved in chemical signalling between neurons. PDE inhibitor drugs are being developed for Huntington's disease - read about them here.

- **Protein tagging.** Scientists call it post-translational modification, we call it tagging. Our cells add little chemical tags to proteins, and the tags alter the proteins' behavior. One approach to treating Huntington's disease is altering the way cells tag the harmful protein. Read all about it in our article on Re-routing the Huntingtin Protein then you can read our latest articles on tagging.

Living with HD

Some of our most popular articles offer the latest information about day-to-day issues faced by Huntington's disease family members.

- 'Making Babies' explains how people at risk of HD can use assisted fertility methods to have HD-free kids - even if the would-be parents don't want to be tested themselves.
- Our article on the 'Genetic Gray Area' of HD sheds light on the often confusing topic of people whose HD genetic test result isn't quite positive or negative, but somewhere in the middle.
- Many HD-affected people are frustrated by a lack of interest or expertise from care professionals. Take a look at our article on Closing the Care Gap to find out about the expert guidance available to professionals - why not show it to the professionals looking after you?

Getting behind the headlines

A key mission of HDBuzz is to help our readers sort out the hope from the hype. News and blog stories can sometimes give a false impression of how promising a particular treatment is, or how soon it could deliver for HD-affected people.

- Our Ten Golden Rules article suggests ten simple steps to help you draw hope from a science news story, without being disappointed by impossible promises.

Meanwhile, these articles deal with areas of HD research that generate a lot of headlines but - while interesting and potentially useful - aren't necessarily able to live up to the hype.

- Mesenchymal Stem Cells (stem cells from bone marrow) - an interesting approach but far from being a treatment for HD right now.
- Our Stem Cell Primer explains the real value of stem cells, right now - as tools to help us understand Huntington's disease.
- Huntexil™ - an experimental drug aimed at improving movements in HD - isn't approved for human use because the clinical trial evidence hasn't convinced the regulatory agencies. Our Latest Huntexil Article will fill you in on where we are and what happens next.

The very latest

We regularly produce reports from major scientific meetings and conferences. They're a great way to get an overview of all the hottest Huntington's disease research. Catch up on the latest conference news here.

Make yourself at home!

HDBuzz is designed so that each article makes sense on its own and gives you all the background info you need. So don't be afraid to explore.

- Each article has a **learn more** box, containing links to original sources and background information.
- Every article has a **topics** box so you can easily find content on a particular subject.

Don't forget to send us feedback via the 'Enjoyed' or 'Didn't understand' buttons, and if there's something about HD research you'd like explained but can't find here, feel free to use the 'Suggest an article' box on the front page.

And to make sure you don't miss anything exciting, follow us on Twitter or Facebook, or sign up for Email updates

Welcome aboard. We're glad you found us.

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. For more information about our disclosure policy see our FAQ...

Glossary

post-translational modification the addition of small chemical tags to a protein after it has been synthesized. These tags often change the location or function of the tagged protein.

huntingtin protein The protein produced by the HD gene.

gene silencing An approach to treating HD that uses targeted molecules to tell cells not to produce the harmful huntingtin protein

clinical trial Very carefully planned experiments designed to answer specific questions about how a drug affects human beings

bone marrow The gooey stuff in the middle of bones, that manufactures blood cells. When eaten, gives dogs a healthy coat and vitality

stem cells Cells that can divide into cells of different types

neuron Brain cells that store and transmit information

KMO kynurenine mono-oxygenase, an enzyme that controls the balance of harmful and protective chemicals resulting from the breakdown of proteins

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